

will enjoy his own retirement as much as those whom he helped now enjoy their own.●

TRIBUTE TO STEVE THOMPSON

● Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor Steve Thompson, his stellar career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the dedication to solving our most difficult natural resources problems that he has demonstrated time and again throughout his career. Thompson is retiring on August 4 after 32 years with the Service.

I know Steve as the regional director of Region 8, formerly the California and Nevada Operations Office, CNO, a job he assumed in 2002. From the regional headquarters in Sacramento, CA, he oversaw Service programs in California, Nevada, and Klamath Basin that administer the Endangered Species Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act and managed 51 national wildlife refuges and 3 national fish hatcheries.

His many honors include being chosen in 1994 as the first "Refuge Manager of the Year" by the National Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Refuge Association. Even more notably, in September 2007, Thompson earned the Distinguished Executive Award, the highest Presidential Rank Award given to career senior executive service employees and the first time a Service employee has been so recognized.

I have worked now with Steve on many issues, including the Cargill salt ponds purchase and ongoing restoration, efforts to restore the Klamath River, habitat conservation planning, and CALFED. For his dedication to help find a way to purchase the Cargill salt ponds, Steve can feel pride at the migratory birds that now have a place to rest in San Francisco Bay on their long journeys along the Pacific flyway.

For his utterly tireless work to find a way to restore the Klamath River, we do not yet know what result will ensue. But thanks to Steve's leadership, we perhaps have a once in a generation opportunity to restore the River and its fisheries while providing certainty to farmers.

What I always found with Steve is that he is completely dedicated to finding that straight and narrow path through the bureaucracy to actually solve our biggest natural resource problems.

Others might find reasons why a solution can't be found or why it might be imperfect from some idealized perspective. Steve just dedicates himself to finding that solution.

He is a straight shooter. He tells you what he is going to do to solve a problem, and then he gets the job done.

All of us who care about California's natural resources will miss him.

Steve, I want to congratulate you on your years of remarkable service to our Nation's fish and wildlife and the people who value them. I hope you can now enjoy a little fishing and a few

quiet moments to contemplate what you have so honorably protected.●

RETIREMENT OF IOWA STATE SENATOR MICHAEL CONNOLLY

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to pay homage to Senator Michael Connolly on his retirement from the Iowa Senate after 30 years of distinguished public service. Mike admirably represented the citizens of Dubuque, IA, for 10 years in the Iowa House and 20 years in the Iowa Senate. He combined a passionate love for his community with progressive politics and a strong work ethic.

When Dubuque fell on hard times after the farm crisis of the 1980s and a loss of manufacturing jobs, Mike Connolly was there to ensure that the State of Iowa was a partner in the economic and cultural renaissance of the city. If you visit Dubuque today, you will find one of the most beautiful and vibrant cities in the Midwest. That did not happen by accident. Senator Connolly and other community leaders formed the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, emphasizing the attitude that everyone would have to pull together to move the city forward. As they say, the proof is in the pudding, and I encourage you, Mr. President, and all of my Senate colleagues, to visit this jewel of a city on the Upper Mississippi.

Senator Connolly is an educator by training, and although his influence has been felt in most of the education legislation of the past three decades, his interests and work have been broad and diverse.

As chairman of the Transportation Committee, Senator Connolly boosted funding to make roads and bridges safer, and developed a new funding formula that recognized the need to enhance the transportation network linking the State's urban population centers. The construction of four-lane roads between Dubuque and Waterloo, Cedar Rapids and the Quad Cities, has led to economic growth throughout the northeast and east-central portion of Iowa.

Senator Connolly also spurred an effort to beautify Iowa's roadways through promotion of the Resource Enhancement and Protection—REAP—program, which included ongoing funding for the Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Program, a partnership between the University of Northern Iowa and Iowa counties to plant prairie grasses and flowers along the State's thoroughfares. The program pays homage to Senator Connolly's father, who was a road laborer with a sixth-grade education who worked and saved so his children could receive a college education.

Senator Connolly also helped modernize Iowa's election laws as chairman of the State Government Committee, including passing election day voter registration legislation and requiring that paper trails be included with elec-

tronic voting machines. He used his position on the Ways and Means Committee to give working Iowans a tax break by removing the sales tax from utility bills.

He was also a leader in the legislature helping to pass antibullying and civil rights legislation that will help protect generations of Iowans to come. It would be difficult, indeed, to catalog all of Senator Mike Connolly's legislative achievements; suffice it to say he has been one of the most dedicated, hard-working and productive members in the history of the Iowa General Assembly.

Iowans, especially those in the greater Dubuque community, will miss Mike's leadership. But I know he will continue to be involved in the civic life of our State and nation. His wonderful wife Martha has been a true partner with him these many years, and his accomplishments are hers as well.

I wish Senator Connolly a long and happy retirement, with plenty of time to spend with his accomplished children, Maureen and John. Thank you, Mike, and Godspeed.●

HONORING THE WINNER SCHOOL DISTRICT

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the Winner School District for its exceptional support to their National Guard and Reserve Employees. The Winner School District is one of 15 employers selected from across the Nation to receive top honors as a 2008 Secretary of Defense Freedom Award. The Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the Department of Defense under the auspices of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve to an employer for their outstanding support to their National Guard and Reserve employees.

The school district was nominated by 2LT Derris Buus of the 155th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard. Buus had glowing remarks for his employer, "The School District has always supported me and my family during times of deployment or training. Mary Fischer and Jim Drake have all made it a point to ensure that my family had everything they needed during my absence. They always made it very easy for me to pursue my career in the SDARNG as well as my career as an educator."

The Winner School District provides a pay supplement for the entire length of deployment for its Guard and Reserve employees. Deployed employees received numerous care packages from the school board and the students. Daily e-mails were sent to deployed employees from students, teachers, principals, and the superintendent. Returning servicemembers teach the same grade and in the same classroom as they did prior to a deployment.

School board members also aid the families of deployed employees. School board members mowed lawns, took children to athletic events, and in one